

News Release



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Contact: Ted Jackson
(559) 822-2332

Two New Buildings Open

26th Annual Rededication Set for Allensworth State Park

EARLIMART, Calif. – A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park during the upcoming annual rededication event to commemorate the opening of two new historic buildings at the park, State Parks officials announced today. The 26th annual rededication celebration will be held Saturday, Oct. 12, 2002, at the park.

“The rededication celebration is an opportunity for park users and supporters to renew their commitment to the park and its symbolic representation of self-determination for African Americans,” said State Parks San Joaquin District Superintendent Ted Jackson.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony will commemorate the opening of the Hackett House and Ashby House and their outbuildings. Descendants of the Hackett family will participate in the ribbon cutting along with other dignitaries and state officials. The completion of the new historic structures constitutes the most ambitious reconstruction and restoration activity seen at the historic park in its 26-year history as a state park. The work is part of an \$8 million capital outlay project for the park that is intended to restore and/or reconstruct many of the historic structures that were present when the town was thriving in the early 1900's.

Allensworth is the only California town to be founded, financed and governed by African-Americans, and was the first of its kind in the nation. Colonel Allen Allensworth, a former slave, chaplain and later the highest ranking African-American officer of his day, founded the small farming town in 1908 with four other black men who were dedicated to the principle of improving the economic and social status of blacks.

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The rededication event, which is open to the public, will be held at the park from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event will feature entertainment from jazz and pop singer Phyllis Battle, formerly a member of the Fifth Dimension, the Hicksters featuring Don Hicks, and a dramatic performance from Motojaye, a performing and creative arts institute for youth. Additional entertainment will be provided by gospel choirs and dance groups. The event will also feature speakers, tours of the park, and living history demonstrations, including park docents dressed in period attire. Numerous food vendors featuring a variety of ethnic foods will be on hand, along with arts and craft vendors. The park charges an entry fee of \$2 per passenger vehicle and \$10 – \$20 per bus, depending on the number of passengers.

Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park is located in Tulare County, approximately 75 miles south of Fresno and 38 miles north of Bakersfield, off Highway 99.

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